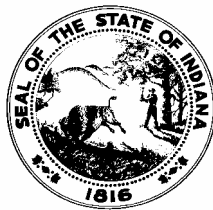# State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana

Things That Go Bump In The Night:
Electronic Information Exchange System:
iXchange Processes and Cycles

Revised

January 2002

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1) Introduction

   a) The system and its purpose

SSACI's electronic information exchange system is designed to give financial aid professionals timely and synoptic information about Indiana students and their application for state grant aid. The information is made available as a text file that can be downloaded and uploaded via a Web-based application, iXchange. Institutions must decrypt the data before using it and encrypt it before sending it back to SSACI. Used properly the data can help ensure eligible students receive state aid to attend their institution of choice. Moreover, making good use of the data as early as possible in each processing cycle will reduce institutional work. There are five major cycles in the process, three of which have associated iXchange files.

The application cycle. (iXchange) This cycle gives institutions information about the status of the student's FAFSA and whether they are entitled to award supplements. The data available in this cycle can answer questions such as: Has the student filed a correct FAFSA? If there are errors on the FAFSA that might make the student ineligible, what are they? Is the student a Twenty-first Century Scholar? Has the student earned an Academic Honors Diploma? Is the student in a WAIT status because of a professional judgment?

The edit cycle. This cycle runs concurrently with the application cycle. Students who do not have correct FAFSAs are notified by post of the errors and what they need to do to fix the errors through the CPS. Institutions are notified of the status of the FAFSA via the application file.

The award cycle. The award cycle starts at the end of the edit cycle and ends right before the notification cycle. The students are notified of their awards by post. Once students receive their award letters, the first notification files are created for institutional use.

The notification cycle. (iXchange) This cycle notifies institutions of the students who have chosen them as their first choice. It tells the amount of the *annual* award the student can expect at the institution. The data available in this cycle can answer questions such as: Is the student receiving a Core 40 supplement? Is the award in a WAIT status because of a loan default? On what PC/EFC was the award calculated?

[∞] This document is a *supplement* to "An Overview of FTP, PGP, and the SSACI Viewer", April 1998 and other documents periodically disseminated by SSACI. It is not meant to replace any or all of them.

The reconciliation cycle. (iXchange) This cycle provides the data needed by the institution to claim the student's award *term by term*. Once a student award has been reconciled, the institution can be paid by SSACI. The data available in this cycle can answer questions such as: What is the student's term award? Is the award in a WAIT status pending action on the institution's side? Has SSACI paid for the award? Associated with these files are two other files (see section 2f, Table 1).

SSACI creates new iXchange files weekly during the cycles. It is expected that institutions download the files each week. The data should be used to update local financial aid systems and to take action on awards that are in a WAIT state. During the application, notification, and reconciliation cycles, institutions can update the data in the iXchange files and return the changed data to SSACI for further processing. Only certain fields are updateable.

b) Things to watch out for!

This document gives an overall picture of SSACI's electronic information exchange system as well as detailed information about particular cycles. Pay special attention to bulleted paragraphs with a checkmark. That is:

✓ A paragraph checked like this means the item under discussion has posed some challenges to users and particular attention should be given.

This document is limited in scope. It deals with the "how to" part of the electronic information exchange system and with interpretation of the data so it can be used to enhance local financial aid tracking systems. Some policy questions are covered but other SSACI documents such as "Dear Colleague" letters are primary sources of that information.

Further, the following discussion does not cover every data element in each of the iXchange files (copies of which are in the Appendix). For example, the notification file contains fields to indicate if a student has a Core 40 certificate, an Academic Honors Diploma, is a 21st Century Scholar or is eligible for a National Guard Supplemental grant but these indicators are not discussed except in passing.

2) A quick overview

c) Timing of the five cycles

The five system cycles are designed to reflect the process of making an award: get a student application, check it for errors, make awards to eligible students, and pay the student (via the school). They are timed from spring to fall to reflect this natural grant awarding process.

d) Yearly schedule

The Appendix contains a schedule of the five cycles during a school year. The application cycle for a new year always overlaps the reconciliation for the old year. Ignoring that for the moment, and only looking at the iXchange cycles for a new year, the application cycle starts around the beginning of February and ends around the beginning

of July. The edit cycle runs concurrently with the application cycle, beginning around the 1st of May and running to early June. As soon as students are notified of possible errors on their FAFSAs and are given sufficient time to correct the errors via the CPS, editing will stop and awards will be created around the 1st of July. Students will be notified of their awards at that time. Around mid July, the notification cycle will begin, followed by the reconciliation cycle starting about mid September and running through the academic year.

e) Weekly schedules

Normally new iXchange files will be available on user iXchange accounts on Monday of each week. Any incoming files received through the previous Wednesday will be processed as part of the Monday update. Near the end of the reconciliation cycle, files will be placed on the iXchange sites more often than once a week and incoming files will be processed more often. The schedules will be announced at the appropriate time via e-mail to the financial aid community.

f) Names of iXchange files

Even though there are only three iXchange cycles, there are five iXchange files available for download. Three of the files are associated with the reconciliation cycle. All files are of the form

$$IVIVIV\textit{TYPE}mmddccyy.dat$$

where IVIVIV[1] is the school's six digit Title IV number, *TYPE* is a short name for the file (it depends on the cycle), and mmddccyy is the date SSACI created the file (such as 03011999, March 1st, 1999). Table 1 lists the short names of the iXchange files and briefly describes them.

i) Availability of files

Table 1 lists the availability of the files. As a rule, the files associated with the application, notification, and reconciliation cycles (APPL, NOTF, and RECN) are available every week during the cycle. The reject record file (REJT) and the update record file (RUPD) are created by SSACI only when there are returned RECN records to be rejected and student award additions or deletions to be detailed.

ii) When you should download

✓ Files should be downloaded weekly and *only the most recent files should be used to update awards, resolve PJs, or clear loan defaults*. Failure to use the most recent data might lead to returned records being rejected because they are out of date. SSACI will

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[1] This is not meant to imply any ER procedures needed by users of this system.

Cycle	Short Name	Description	iXchange Availability	SSACI Viewer
Application	APPL	Basic data about the FAFSA used to determine eligibility, especially standard SSACI edits. *Can be returned* to SSACI to clear PJs and Loan Defaults. Used by schools to help students fix their SARs via the CPS.	Weekly.	Can be Viewed. Can be updated with the Viewer.
Notification	NOTF	Basic data about the award for the coming terms. Summer file applies to coming year. Between term file might have only term award for new students. *Can be returned* to SSACI to clear PJs and Loan Defaults.	Weekly.	Can be Viewed. Can be updated with the Viewer.
Reconciliation	RECN	The term award that needs to be reconciled for payment or refunded. *Must be returned* to SSACI after updating award amounts, PJs, or Loan Defaults. Clearing a PJ is a three-step process: clear the PJ, get an active award record, reconcile the award.	Weekly. Twice a week near end of the term.	Can be Viewed. Can be updated with the Viewer
	REJT	An RECN look-alike of user returned records that could not be processed and hence were rejected. Refers to records from last returned RECN file. *Cannot be returned* to SSACI.	Only when records were rejected from the user's previously returned RECN file.	Can be Viewed. Should not be updated with the Viewer
	RUPD	A short file showing students "A"dded or "D"eleted from the school's file since the previous RECN file. *Cannot be returned* to SSACI.	Only when there are student changes since the last RECN file.	Must be viewed in a word processor or spreadsheet.

accumulate weekly files as long as disk space is available; if files must be removed from iXchange accounts, the FIFO rule will be followed: first in, first out.

3) The cycles

g) Application Cycle

The Application Download iXchange file replaces the "Institutional Denial Roster" that schools have received in the (distant) past. It contains the same information about edits and the student's aid application as on the paper roster plus much more. As with the rosters, it is hoped that schools will work with students to clean up their SARs via the CPS so their awards can be processed. Students will, of course, receive edit letters from SSACI detailing the data that needs fixing.

✓ An important note about *first choice schools*: an APPL record will be sent only to the school that the student has listed as their first choice on the FAFSA. Since renewal applications are not updated by the CPS to reflect the student's actual school of enrollment, the application might contain the student's original FAFSA list of schools. That list might not have your school as the first choice. Unless you make sure students correct the schools on their SAR and put your school first, you will not receive an APPL record for them.

✓ The first choice rule means that if a student requests SSACI to make another school their first choice, that student's record will be taken out of your file and put into the other school's file without any notice. That is, the APPL file is a *snapshot* of the current state of students with you as their first choice.

i) Length of cycle

The application cycle runs from around the beginning of February and ends around the beginning of July. The data in the APPL file is most useful when the files are downloaded every week: Old news is bad news and no news is very, very bad news.

ii) Structure of the data

The Appendix has a record layout of the APPL file. The "edit indicators" consist of a series of data fields from the FAFSA (SAR) showing the ISIR data we receive and use to decide if a record has an edit. Field 10 in the file will tell you the ISIR transaction number that generated the data. There are a series of comment fields describing the data and the edit too. For example, the parental "residency check" fields are, from the iXchange layout are listed in Table 2.

Field 27 (Table 2) indicates if there is an **Edit 02** on the student. From the data you should be able to figure out what caused the error. This residency check looks at Fields 23 and 26. If either is in error and the field is corrected on the next transaction, the "Correction Codes" in Fields 24 and 26 will tell you who made the correction: the student, you, or us. Once *you* make a correction, we will no longer accept student changes to that field; once *we* make a correction, we will no longer accept changes from you or the student for that field. The most common errors that generate an Edit 02 are

leaving the state field blank or only reporting a year of residency on the FAFSA, in which case the CPS makes the entire MMCCYY field blank rather than just the month part.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Table 2
Application Download File
(Partial Record)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Field #</td><td>Start Position</td><td>End Position</td><td>Field Length</td><td>Field Name</td><td>Valid Field Content</td><td>Notes</td></tr>
</table>

Field #	Start Position	End Position	Field Length	Field Name	Valid Field Content	Notes
24	91	92	2	Parent Legal State	Any valid state code	
25	93	93	1	Parent Legal State Correction	1, 2, or 3	**1** – SSACI verification **2** – Institution correction **3** – Student submitted
26	94	99	6	Parent Legal State Dt	MMCCYY	Could be the default date 121993
27	100	100	1	Parent Legal State Dt Correction	1, 2, or 3	**1** – SSACI verification **2** – Institution correction **3** – Student submitted
28	101	101	1	Not IN Resident **Edit 02**	Y, N	**Y** – caused an edit for SSACI **N** - no edit created

A glance at the iXchange layout shows the other Edit indicators and the data we use to determine if there is an edit. Only in one case is there partial information about an edit in the iXchange record: an Edit 05 is generated if there is no PC or EFC in the ISIR record. This can happen for many reasons that we could not possibly list. Hence the iXchange record only indicates that the PC or EFC is missing but does not give detailed reasons. However, in this case the student will receive a detailed letter from the federal government about the missing data.

There are two and possibly three fields in the APPL file that you can update: Fields 70 and 71, and possibly Field 36. (Note well, though, that if you update any of the fields, you must always update Field 1 with a "U", just as on the NOTF and RECN records). Students with flags in either of these fields will be in WAIT status (Field 8). Field 70 is the usual PJ Reason Code field but with a new twist that should save you the bother of having to fax us the student's PC in one special case:

Field 71 is a new updateable field. Using this field, you can clear a student whose record is in WAIT because of a loan default or overpayment. You do this by putting a "Y" in the field and returning the APPL file to SSACI. You no longer need to send us the

documentation that clears the student *but you must of course keep such documentation on file where it could be examined during an audit*.

iii) Note on clearing a PJ with a code 99

✓ If a PJ is made on an **01** transaction and you are using a Code 99 to indicate SSACI will not accept the PJ, you must also update the correct PC (Field 36 in the APPL file) for the student. Note that a PJ can only occur on the first transaction if you are changing a student's status from dependent to independent. Therefore if SSACI rejects the PJ, we need the PC (and not the EFC) to calculate an award since the student is assumed to be dependent for a state award. You must send us (preferably by fax) the PC and all the supporting documentation.

iv) Status Codes

The following are the status codes for records in the APPL file. The meaning of the status codes is clear. Clearing an APPD would require the student or you to correct the SSN via the CPS or, if that fails, by contacting us with the correct SSN. Clearing an APED would require the student or you to make changes to the SAR via the CPS.

APPD Potential Duplicate - it will not continue to the edit procedure until the discrepancy has been cleaned up

APED Application Edits exist and must be cleaned up (if they can) before an award can be calculated

APCL Application is Clean - an award can be calculated

WAIT PJ, Loan Default, Title IV Overpayment, or Drug List - *an award can be calculated* but it cannot be reconciled until the discrepancy is cleaned up.

h) Notification Cycle

Around mid July, the notification cycle will begin, just after students have been notified by post of their awards (or lack thereof). It will end around mid September. The purpose of this file is threefold: (1) to notify you of students who have you as their first choice; (2) to tell you that the students are eligible for award consideration (that is, they have no edits); and (3) to tell you of their award amount, including students with a zero (0) dollar award.

i) Length of cycle

The notification cycle runs from around mid July to about mid September. The data in the NOTF file is most useful when the files are downloaded and used every week: Old news is bad news and no news is very, very bad news.

ii) Structure of the data

The NOTF files differ from the other iXchange files in two very important ways. First, students who are APNA (see iv below for status codes), that is, students who do not have an award will appear in the very first NOTF file and only in that file (except in one case,

see section v1 below). After that first file, the records will not be included. Second, unlike the snapshot iXchange files (APPL and RECN), the NOTF file is cumulative in the sense that it shows award changes by adding a new record with an action code of "C". The old record will have an action code of "I" and the award will be inactivated (status code INAC).. On the next RECN file, the action code will be changed to an "I".

✓ Thus a student can have many records in the NOTF file. It is important to check the appropriate dates (e.g., the date the record was updated) in the student's record to know what is the latest, most current record and student status.

The action codes and meanings are

I   This record contains the current award information for the student. The SSACI status codes (see iv below) for these records will be APNA, APAC, or WAIT.

A   This record contains a student new to the institution. *The code will appear only once* before reverting to an I. The SSACI status codes for these records will be APAC or WAIT.

C   This record contains changes in award data for the student. If the student was currently at this institution and their award amount changed, there will be two "C" records for the student, one with the old award information and an INAC SSACI status and one with the new award information and a APAC or WAIT SSACI status. *The code will appear only once* before reverting to an I.

D   This record contains a previously enrolled student that has asked to have their award transferred to a different institution. All the SSACI status codes for these records will be INAC.

U   Institutions must[2] change field 1 to a "U" when the professional judgment (PJ) has been updated or the Title IV eligibility field has changed. This will indicate to SSACI that the record needs to be processed when the encrypted NOTF file is returned to us..

(1) What the NOTF file captures

The award amounts in the NOTF are *annual* award amounts. The amounts for the Higher Education Award, Freedom of Choice award, and 21st Century Scholar award are listed separately for each student. It is very important that the award type codes be checked carefully. These codes tell you if the award is for just one term or just two quarters or if it is a one term partial award or if it indeed is for the entire academic year. The codes and meanings are

EA	One semester award only
EC	One trimester award only
EF	Two trimester award only

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[2] The *SSACI Viewer* automatically does this if a record is updated.

EI	Full academic year award
EJ	One quarter award only
EK	Two quarter award only
EP	One term partial award
EQ	More than one term partial award

✓ Be very careful to *not* use the NOTF award to determine a term award unless you check the award type codes. For example, if the NOTF award were for one term only (EA or EP) but you cut it in half and reconciled for the half in term 1–thinking it was the whole term award–, *you and the student have lost the other half of the award.* Since the award was for only one term and you reconciled for that term, the award is paid in full. *Split NOTF awards into term awards only when it is an EI award*.

(2) NOTF captures fluid data

The NOTF file represents very fluid data. Students new to your school since the last NOTF file are added to the file with the action code "A", students who transfer their awards since the last NOTF file are listed with a "D".

✓ Since special action codes used in the NOTF file ("C"change, "A"dd, and "D"elete) only appear once before they revert to an "I", failure to download and study[3] each and every file means you will lose valuable information.

(3) Change codes

When an award changes between NOTF files, there is usually a reason. It could be because of changes in the student's PC/EFC or because of an institution change. The NOTF file uses a two-character change reason code. It should be studied carefully. The list of all possible change codes follows. Not all the codes would appear in an NOTF file. For example, the (new) code AP "Add Part Time student/award" would be used by SSACI after you added a student when reconciling for a part time award. All the codes are listed for convenience.[4]

AA	Change due to revised data
AB	Change due to your college's verification process
AD	Change du e to family size adjustment
AE	Change due to revised FAFSA application
AF	Change in dependency status
AP	Add Part Time student/award
BA	Change of college choice (full year)
BB	Change of college choice for spring semester only

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[3] study \Stud"y\, n.; pl. Studies. [OE. studie, L. studium, akin to studere to study; possibly akin to Gr. ? haste, zeal, ? to hasten; cf. OF. estudie, estude, F. ['e]tude. Cf. Etude, Student, Studio, Study, v. i.] 1. A setting of the mind or thoughts upon a subject; hence, application of mind to books, arts, or science, or to any subject, for the purpose of acquiring knowledge.

[4] All the codes used by you or SSACI in the FTP files can be printed from the *SSACI Viewer* by printing the data dictionary. They are also in the Appendix of this document.

BC	Change of college choice fall semester only
BD	Change of college choice (full year)
BE	Change of college choice for fall trimester only
BF	Change of college choice for winter trimester only
BG	Change of college choice for spring trimester
BH	Change of college choice for fall/winter trimester
BI	Change of college choice for fall and spring trimester
BJ	Change of college choice for winter and spring trimester
BK	Change of college choice (full year)
BL	Change of college choice for win/spring/sum quarters
BM	Change of college choice fall quarter only
BN	Change of college choice winter quarter only
BO	Change of college choice spring quarter only
BP	Change of college choice summer quarter only
BQ	Change of college for fall and winter quarters
BR	Change of college for winter and spring quarters
BS	Change of college for spring and summer quarters
BT	Change of college for fall and spring quarters
BU	Change of college for fall and summer quarters
BV	Change of college for winter and spring quarters
BW	Change of college for winter and summer quarters
BX	Change of college for spring and summer quarters
CA	Grant withdrawn due to revised data
CB	College choice not a participant in Indiana Grants
CC	Award adjusted or withdrawn due to other financial aid
CD	Award withdrawn because student is not an IN Resident
CE	Award withdrawn because parents not IN Residents
CF	Award withdrawn due to unsatisfactory academic progress
CG	Award withdrawn due to prior Bachelor's Degree
CH	Award withdrawn due to loan default or overpayment
CI	Award withdrawn due to a duplicate
CJ	Award withdrawn due to drug hold
XA	Award adjusted or withdrawn for other reasons
XB	Award adjusted, student enrolled less than full-time
XC	Award changed to a Part Time Grant or part time NGS grant
YA	Award withdrawn because student not enrolled
ZA	Award not used, student enrolled full time
ZB	Award not used, student enrolled less than full-time

iii) Annual awards

The award in the NOTF file is always the annual award for "that student at that institution at that time". For the beginning-of-the-year (summer) NOTF file, the meaning of annual (subject to the award type code) is straightforward. But for the between term NOTF file, the meaning of annual is very special. An NOTF award for the second term for a student

new to your school is the annual award for that student at your school at that time but it is not the same as the annual award the student would get if they had attended term 1 also. To repeat:

✓ Be very careful to *not* use the NOTF award to determine a term award unless you check the award type codes. For example, if the NOTF award were for one term only (EA or EP) but you cut it in half and reconciled for the half in term 1–thinking it was the whole term award–, *you and the student have lost the other half of the award.* Since the award was for only one term and you reconciled for that term, the award is paid in full. *Split NOTF awards into term wards only when it is an EI award.*

       iv) Status Codes

There are four status codes for the NOTF file. Remember that student records with the APNA status will appear *only in the first summer* NOTF file (but see v1 below). The INAC status code could come about in a number of ways. For example, if the student transfers their award to another school, the award for your school will be inactivated (INAC) and the action code set to a "D". But that action code will appear only once, when the student status first changed from the previous NOTF file, before it is switched back to an "I". There will be no subsequent records for this student at your school.

A record (award) could be inactivated if the PC/EFC changed so that a new award had to be created. The old award record is made INAC and new one is created with the new award, a "C"hange action code, and a status of APAC, except when the reason for the change was a professional judgment (PJ). In this case, the status code would be WAIT until the PJ reason is processed by SSACI; once processed, the status code would change to APAC. The status codes are:

        APAC Application was clean and an award was created
        APNA Application was clean but no award was created
        INAC The award is inactive due to a new award being created or a transfer to another institution
        WAIT The award is on hold awaiting further information (PJ, Loan Default, Title IV Overpayment, or Drug List) -- it cannot be reconciled until it is corrected with an appropriate PJ reason or other code

       v) What is WAIT status?

An award in WAIT means that it cannot be reconciled or paid and will default to INAC if no action is taken by the school to clear the WAIT. For example, if a student has an active award that is modified by a PJ, the potential new award will go into WAIT until the school sends SSACI an appropriate code to explain the PJ. If the code is acceptable, an award can then be made ACTV on the next iXchange cycle. For the notification cycle, the next NOTF file will contain an active (ACTV) version of the award.

✓ For reconciliation the situation is different. Since only an ACTV award can be reconciled, it takes two iXchange cycles to act on the award: One to clear the WAIT, another to get an ACTV record to reconcile. Waiting to the last minute to clear the WAIT might mean there is no time at the end of the term to reconcile the record.

(1) Special "goofy WAITs"

There is one very special way in which a student can be tagged as in WAIT status. The normal way is that the student has an award, a PJ is made, and the award is placed in WAIT. However, a student can be put into a goofy WAIT if their status changed from no award (APNA) to a potential award. If a student initially had no award, they would appear in the first and only the first notification file with a status of APNA and they would never appear in a reconciliation file. But if a PJ potentially changes that status (say by lowering the PC/EFC), the student might be eligible for an award.

✓ To make sure that these students aren't lost, a record will be put into the notification (and reconciliation) file as a WAIT but with *no data beyond SSN and name*. That is, except for the barest of information to identify the student and the PJ flag being "Y", the record will be blank including the term code. Hence these students can be readily identified and acted upon to clear the PJ.

(2) PJs

✓ Professional Judgments (PJs) are discussed fully in the "Dear Colleague" letter schools receive in the spring of each year. It is important to note here that PJs should be resolved as soon as possible in the APPL or NOTF cycles (and RECN) by updating the student's WAIT record with a valid PJ reason code and sending the file with the updated record back to SSACI as quickly as possible.

The valid codes (and their meanings) that can be used to resolve a PJ are:

Dependency Change PJ

01   Irreparable breakdown in the family

02   Death of sole supporting parent

03   Other (Unique circumstance that *has been discussed* with SSACI)

PC/EFC Adjustment PJ

51   Medical and dental expenses in excess of what can be deducted from income

52   Death of a parent

53   Uninsured expenses relating from a loss or damage to home or car

54   Insurance payments received from loss or damage to home or car

55   Other (Unique circumstance that *has been discussed* with SSACI)

56   Parent(s) verifiably enrolled in college

For Both Kinds Of PJs

99   Does not qualify for dependency override or EFC/PC adjustment for the SSACI grant program

If an invalid code is used in an attempt to resolve a PJ during the notification cycle, the code will be ignored and the record unchanged in the next NOTF file. If the code is accepted, one of two possible actions will be taken by SSACI: If the PJ reason code is

anything but a "99", then the data on the CPS transaction that initiated the PJ is accepted and used to calculate an award, that is, the *current* information is used. On the other hand, if the code is "99", then SSACI reverts to the *previous* CPS transaction and uses that data to calculate an award.

(3) Loan default or overpayment

You can use the NOTF file to clear a student whose record is in WAIT because of a loan default or overpayment. You do this by putting a "Y" in the appropriate field in the NOTF[5] file. You no longer need to send SSACI the documentation that clears the student *but you must of course keep such documentation on file where it could be examined during an audit*.

(4) Drug infraction

As a rule, students with a Federal drug hold are not eligible for state awards (this applies in particular to 21st Century Scholars). If this condition can be cleared at all and the student taken out of WAIT status it must be cleared by SSACI. Contact SSACI if there are questions about a drug infraction WAIT.

vi) Title 4 eligibility

By default, all students *not* in a WAIT status due to loan default/overpayment or drug infraction are ordinarily Title 4 eligible. However, if a student with an active award record should not be eligible for Title 4 funds (such as prison inmates), schools must change the Title 4 eligibility code to "N".

vii) A final NOTF bump in the night

✓ If a student record is not in the NOTF file and you think it should be, check first that the student has in fact told SSACI you are their first choice school.

✓ If you are convinced that SSACI has been notified, then check to see if the student was an APNA in the first notification file.

✓ If the student was not APNA, check if the student is eligible for an award. If a student switches, for example, from an independent college where they had an award to a public where they do *not* have an award, the student will be deleted from the first school's file but *not added to the new school's file*.

✓ Remember, after the first NOTF file (and for all RECN files), *only students with awards will appear in your iXchange files*. After all, the SSACI system GRADS is an award tracking system, not a no-award tracking system.

✓ The only exception to the previous rule is if the change in award status came about because of a PJ. In this case, the student record can be in goofy WAIT status until you resolve the PJ.

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[5] Tentative layouts for the FTP files are in the Appendix.

i) Reconciliation/Rejection/RUPD

The reconciliation cycle provides the data needed by the institution to claim the student's award *term by term*. Once a student award has been reconciled, the institution can be paid by SSACI. The cycle consists of a number of sub-cycles that start and end with each term of the academic year. The first cycle starts about mid-September and runs to the end of the term 1 around mid-December when award records are closed out. Term 2 reconciliation then starts and the cycles continue until all terms are reconciled.

Associated with this cycle are three iXchange files: The file of awards, RECN; the file REJT of records rejected during a reconciliation attempt; and the RUPD file, which lists students "A"dded to or "D"eleted from the *current* RECN file when compared to the *previous* RECN file. Reject files contain only those records rejected and a file would be created only when there is a failed attempt to reconcile a term award. RUPD files are created whenever SSACI receives information that an award has been switched from one school to another *or* taken away from a student at the same school. The award would be added to the new school's RECN file and deleted from the old.

i) Length of cycle

The reconciliation cycle runs from around mid-September to about mid–May with two or three sub-cycles based on the number of terms SSACI pays. The data in the RECN file is most useful when the files are downloaded and used every week, either to track the award status of students or to reconcile.

ii) Structure of the data

The RECN file is a snapshot of the awards for all students at a particular school at a particular time, both term and week during the term. During the *next* term all paid records from the previous term also appear in the RECN file. This is both as a matter of end-of-term record and because any refunds for that paid term must be made using those records. Any awards not paid – for whatever reason – at the end of the term are marked as inactive and removed from the RECN files for *that* term. A new award offer can be made for the next term. That is, an inactive term 1 record would not appear in the RECN file but an active ready-to-be reconciled term 2 award would appear (as long as the student is eligible and has not transferred the award).

(1) Captures what?

The reconciliation files capture the most basic information about awards: how much. A record in the RECN file tells schools how much money SSACI has *offered* the student for the Higher Education Award, the Freedom of Choice award and the 21st Century Scholar award. The information is dynamic in the sense that before an award is reconciled, it could change if the PC/EFC is changed. During the reconciliation cycle SSACI will accept significant changes to a SAR (those that could change an award) via the CPS *only from schools*. Hence, if you make changes to a SAR, you should already know the status of the student's award.

iii) Term award and reconciliation by term

All reconciliation of awards must be done term by term. If an award is left unreconciled at the end of the term, the award is lost and cannot be reinstated. Moreover, once an award is reconciled, it cannot be increased but only decreased through a refund and then only after it is paid by SSACI.

✓ It is extremely important that you balance reconciling for the right dollars against reconciling early or late in the term. Waiting to reconcile means waiting for your money (beyond the initial payment). Reconciling too early means that if a student's circumstances (e.g., PC/EFC) changes, you cannot claim a new award for that term. But if you – the school and not the student – submits in a timely fashion a revised SAR for term 2, it is very likely a new award for that term can be calculated using the new data. Obviously, these comments apply from term 2 to term 3 as well.

✓ On the other hand, if the PC/EFC change for the reconciled term means the student should receive a *lower* award for that term, you must *refund* SSACI the difference. SSACI cannot grant an amount larger than the "right" award for that term but it can grant one for a lower amount.[6]

iv) Status codes

The status codes used for RECN records and their meanings follow. They are clear.

ACTV	Term award is active and needs to be reconciled
ADPD	Term award has been paid
ADRC	Term award has been reconciled and needs to be paid
ADRF	Term award has been fully or partially refunded
WAIT	Term award is on hold, waiting further information (PJ, Loan Default, Title IV Overpayment, or Drug List)

v) What is WAIT status?

An award in WAIT means that it cannot be reconciled or paid and will default to INAC at the end of term if no action is taken by the school to clear the WAIT. For example, if a student has an active award that is modified by a PJ, the potential new award will go into WAIT until the school sends SSACI an appropriate code to explain the PJ. If the code is acceptable, an award can then be made ACTV.

✓ For reconciliation the situation is different than for notification. Since only an ACTV award can be reconciled, it takes two iXchange cycles to act on the award: One to clear the WAIT, another to get an ACTV record to reconcile. Waiting to the last minute to clear the WAIT might mean there is no time at the end of the term to reconcile the award and it will be lost.

(1) Special "goofy WAITs"

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[6] Questions about what to do with students awaiting verification (through QA or otherwise) cannot be answered in this "how to" document. Check the appropriate "Dear Colleague" letter.

There is one very special ways in which a student can be tagged as in WAIT status. The normal way is that the student has an award, circumstances change, a PJ is made, and the award is placed in WAIT. However, a student can be put into a goofy WAIT if their status changed from no award (APNA) to a potential award. If a student initially had no award, they would appear in the first and only the first notification file with a status of APNA and they would never appear in a reconciliation file. But if a PJ potentially changes that status (say by lowering the PC/EFC), the student might be eligible for an award.

✓ To make sure that these students aren't lost, a record will be put into the reconciliation (and notification) file as a WAIT but with *no data beyond SSN and name*. That is, except for the barest of information to identify the student and the PJ flag being "Y", the record will be blank including the term code. Hence these students can be readily identified and acted upon to clear the PJ

(2) PJs

✓ Professional Judgments (PJs) are discussed fully in the "Dear Colleague" letter schools receive in the spring of each year. It is important to note here that PJs should be resolved as soon as possible in the APPL or NOTF cycles or RECN by updating the student's WAIT record with a valid PJ reason code and sending the file with the updated record back to SSACI as quickly as possible.

The valid codes (and their meanings) that can be used to resolve a PJ are:

Dependency Change PJ

01   Irreparable breakdown in the family

02   Death of sole supporting parent

03   Other (Unique circumstance that *has been discussed* with SSACI)

PC/EFC Change PJ

51   Medical and dental expenses in excess of what can be deducted from income

52   Death of a parent

53   Uninsured expenses relating from a loss or damage to home or car

54   Insurance payments received from loss or damage to home or car

55   Other (Unique circumstance that *has been discussed* with SSACI)

56   Parent(s) verifiably enrolled in college

For Both Kinds Of PJs

99   Does not qualify for dependency or EFC/PC override for the SSACI grant program

If an invalid code is used in an attempt to resolve a PJ during the reconciliation cycle, the record will be rejected and placed in the REJT file with a reject reason code of RJPJ (see section h) for more on rejection codes). If the code is accepted, one of two possible actions will be taken by SSACI: If the PJ reason code is anything but a "99", then the

data on the CPS transaction that initiated the PJ is accepted and used to calculate an award, that is, the *current* information is used. On the other hand, if the code is "99", then SSACI reverts to the *previous* CPS transaction and uses that data to calculate an award.

(3) Loan default or overpayment. An RECN bump in the night.

✓ You *cannot* use the RECN file to clear a student whose record is in WAIT because of a loan default or overpayment. If the WAIT has not been cleared via the APPL or NOTF files, you must submit to SSACI in writing a full explanation and documentation before there is any possibility we will act to clear the flag. Failure to act during the APPL and NOTF cycles could mean the loss of the award.

(4) Drug infraction

As a rule, students with a Federal drug hold are not eligible for state awards (this applies in particular to 21st Century Scholars). If this condition can be cleared at all and the student taken out of WAIT status it must be cleared by SSACI. Contact SSACI if there are questions about a drug infraction WAIT.

vi) Title 4 eligibility

By default, all students *not* in a WAIT status due to loan default or overpayment or drug infraction are ordinarily Title 4 eligible. However, if a student with an active award record should not be eligible for Title 4 funds (such as prison inmates), schools must change the Title 4 eligibility code to "N".

4) Reconciliation/Rejection/RUPD. Another look.

a) Reconciliation and payment

Once an award is correctly reconciled, the amount will be charged against the advance or initial payment. If not all of the advance payment has been used, the award will be marked as paid (ADPD) immediately. Once the advance payment is used up, it is possible the award cannot be immediately paid. In this case, the award will be marked as ADRC. It will be paid on the next RECN cycle.

i) EFT

To pay a school money after the advance payment has been used up, SSACI creates for each type of award a claim voucher. Once these are approved, the State Auditor will initiate an electronic funds transfer (EFT) to deposit award money directly to the school's designated bank and account.

b) Action Codes

The action codes used in the reconciliation or rejection file and their meanings are

I	This record contains term award information for a student.
R	SSACI has rejected the change that the institution tried to make. See the second field in the file for the reject reason. *Appears only in the REJT file.*

U Institutions *MUST* change field 1 to a "U" when the professional judgment has been updated, awards have been reconciled, a Part Time Grant is given to a student that existed in this file, or Title 4 eligibility changed. This will indicate to SSACI that the record needs to be processed in their system.

A Institutions *MUST* change field 1 to an "A" when an institution is adding a student that does not exist in the file and is receiving a Part Time Grant. This will indicate to SSACI that the record needs to be processed in their system.

The action codes in the RUPD file are:

A The record has been added to the RECN file because the student's award has been transferred to your school.

D This record has been removed from your RECN files because the student has transferred the award to another school or the award has been recalculated and it is zero (the student is APNA).

An RUPD file always makes a comparison between the current RECN file and the previous one because it shows records that have been added to the new RECN file or deleted from the old one. If there have been no added or deleted awards between RECN files, there will be no RUPD file. The file cannot be read by the SSACI Viewer. It can be opened in any word processor or spreadsheet application. Its record layout is:

Name	Start	End	Length	Format
Action	1	1	1	
Year	2	5	4	ccyy
Title 4	6	11	6	
SSN	12	20	9	
First	21	29	9	
Last	30	45	16	
MI	46	46	1	
DOB	47	54	8	mmddccyy
Date Created	55	62	8	mmddccyy
Term code	63	63	1	1,2,3, or 4

c) Blanks versus zeroes (0)

✓ In all iXchange files, a blank award is not the same as a zero award. Thus if you mean to reconcile an award for zero dollars you must explicitly put the zero in the appropriate award field (and use a change code too; see next section). *Blank values are ignored even if a change code such as YA is used that implies the award is zer*o. Using a change code and a blank amount will result in a rejected record.

d) Rules for reconciliation and refunds

The rules for reconciling term awards for full time students are straightforward and are based on a few simple principles[7]:

I.   Awards cannot exceed actual approved tuition and fees and recalculation of awards based on reduced credit hours is necessary.

II.   Awards paid by SSACI cannot exceed awards offered by SSACI.

III.   The HEA and FOC awards go hand-in-hand.

IV.   The 21st Century Scholar (21C) award National Guard Supplemental (NGS) grant are supplements applied after other tuition specific aid.

V.   Reconciled or refunded amounts different than offered amounts must be explained.

From these principles it is easy to derive the following:

✓ Reconciled amounts must be less than or equal to offered amounts for all awards.

✓ If the actual approved tuition and fees is less than the award, the reconciled amount must be for the lower amount.

✓ If *any* reconciled amount is less than the offered amount, a change code must be used even if the other amounts are not reduced.

✓ Refunds can be made only after SSACI has paid the award.

✓ Refunds can be made to paid awards at any time during the academic year.

✓ Once a refund is made the award is closed for the academic year.

✓ If a refund is made to *any* paid award, a change code must be used.

✓ HEA and FOC grants must be reconciled together at the same time.

✓ A 21C or NGS grant must be reconciled with HEA or FOC or after but never before.

✓ If an HEA or an FOC award is reduced, so must the 21C and NGS award be reduced.

   ✓ BUT as long as the total of the two new awards (one or both being reduced) is less then or equal to the total of the original awards, the changes will be accepted.

✓ A 21C grant or NGS *can* be reduced without reducing HEA or FOC and *must* be reduced if the student receives other tuition specific aid (which must be applied before 21C or NGS).

i)   When to use change codes

Change codes are of two types: those used by SSACI to inform schools of award changes, and those used by schools when a reconciled amount is less than the offer or when a refund is being made. The Data Dictionary in the Appendix contains a list of all codes. The change codes that can be used by schools are:

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[7] These are derived from the Ferengi *Rules of Acquisition.*

CC Award adjusted or withdrawn due to other financial aid

CF Award withdrawn due to unsatisfactory academic progress

CG Award withdrawn due to prior Bachelor's Degree

CH Award withdrawn due to loan default or overpayment

XA Award adjusted or withdrawn for other reasons

XC Award changed to a Part Time grant (non-proprietary)

YA Award withdrawn because student not enrolled

ZB Award not used, student enrolled less than full-time

✓ A change code must be used whenever the reconciled amount is less than the offered amount for any award. In the case an award is withdrawn, the reconciled amount must be zero (0) and not a blank.

✓ A change code must be used whenever a refund is made for any amount.

 ii) Part time students. A real bump in the night.

Granting awards to part time students is at once simple and complex[8]. SSACI relies strongly on the professionalism of financial aid offices in making sure the awards are calculated correctly and that indeed the students are eligible. Part time grants by their nature are term awards and must be reapplied for in every term.

 (1) Changing from full time status to part time

A full time award can be changed to a part time award for a particular term. For any remaining terms in the academic year, the student's award would revert back to a full time award.

Make sure the correct change reason code is used if a full time award is being changed to a part time award in a RECN file. It is XC. Make sure to also update the award amount field, the degree type field, and both the credit hour fields. Failure to do all these updates will result in a rejected record. (Remember: Field 1 in the record has to be updated with a "U" also. This is done automatically by the SSACI Viewer.)

 (a) Minimum and maximum award

A part time grant must be more than $50 and less than the term equivalent of the full time award.

✓ If you cannot compute a student's part time grant using the established rules, they are not eligible for a part time award. For example, if the student's PC/EFC excludes them from a full time award, it obviously excludes them from a part time award as well.

 (2) Adding part time students. A bump in the night.

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[8] The eligibility requirements and rules for calculating part time grants are covered in separate mailings and the "Dear Colleague" letter.

✓ When adding part time students to a RECN file be sure to use the SSN, name, and date of birth *exactly as they are listed on the student's SAR* (and therefore the CPS record, against which the data is checked). Make sure to put the first and last name in the correct fields and to update the award amount field, the degree type field, and both the credit hour fields. No change reason code is needed when adding the award (but field 1 must be updated with an "A"). The student must have a clean FAFSA on file before SSACI can process the award.

(3) Part time records and "goofy WAITs".

SSACI downloads all ISIR records throughout most of the year even if the records are too late to be eligible for an HEA of FOC award. This is to make sure that the students can be considered for a part time grant. In some cases the student's record will be in a WAIT status because of an outstanding PJ or loan default. During the notification cycle these special goofy WAITs will be in the NOTF files. *However, if the WAIT is not cleared up during that cycle the records will not appear in any RECN file and any attempt to add the student as a recipient of a part time grant will be rejected.*

(4) Rejection of part time records.

A part time record could be rejected for any of the following reasons.

RJFP   Attempt to reconcile Part Time grant after HEA/FOC or 21st Century or National Guard has been paid

RJST   Recipient of a Part Time grant not in SSACI database

RJSU   Recipient of a Part Time grant does not have a clean FAFSA

RJSW   Incomplete or incorrect Part Time grant information, including failure to use change code XC or supply degree data

RJ02   Recipient of a Part Time grant has an Edit 02 and may not be an Indiana resident

RJ04   Recipient of a Part Time grant has an Edit 04 and has used their four years of eligibility

RJ10   Recipient of a Part Time grant has an Edit 10 and has used their ten years of eligibility

The RJSW rejection stops all further processing on the returned RECN record. That is, once an RJSW is found, no checks are made to see if the record is in the database or if there are additional edits. *Check the student's eligibility with* **eGrads** *first!*

(5) Paying part term awards. A "destroy the dinosaurs" bump in the night.

✓ *An added part time award is tentative until SSACI pays the award. That is, if you request a student be added to our system for a part time award, do NOT disburse the funds until SSACI marks the award as paid. SSACI might reject the award for good cause, which means you are liable for the money if the award was paid to the student.*

(6) The SSACI sequence of events when adding a part time student.

If you add a part time award for a student already in our database, it means the student was not eligible for a full time award. There are many reasons why a student in the SSACI database did not have an award. The added student will be checked against those reasons and the record might be rejected. The record will be rejected with an appropriate rejection code:

- ✓ If the student has an Edit 17 (loan default or overpayment), the record will be rejected with an RJSU.

- ✓ If the student is in a WAIT status for a PJ, the record will be rejected with an RJSU.

- ✓ If the student has an Edit 02 (not an IN resident), the record will be rejected with an RJ02.

- ✓ If the student has an Edit 04 (used 4 years of eligibility), the record will be rejected with an RJ04.

- ✓ If the student has an Edit 10 (used 10 years of eligibility), the record will be rejected with an RJ10.

- ✓ If you add a part time award for a student and the record is rejected with a code of RJST, it is almost certainly due to a different SSN, last name or DOB than what SSACI has on file. Name changes are the most frequent cause of problems. For example,

  - ✓ A student completes the FAFSA as a JR (junior) but isn't so marked in your files.

  - ✓ A student changes their name between filing the FAFSA and registering for classes.

    (7) Part-time grants and the National Guard Supplemental Grant

A student eligible for the NGS can receive a part-time NGS grant but only if the student was offered a fill-time NGS grant. Use the NGS amount field for the dollar amount of the grant and complete the usual part-time grant data fields (course hours etc) on the RECN record.

e) Reconciliation, refunds, and writing checks

Refunds can be made any time throughout the academic year after a record is paid. Term 1 paid records can be refunded during term 2 or term 3; term 1 or term 2 during term3. Refunding an award requires a change reason code.

- ✓ Calculating refund amounts is pretty straightforward. If SSACI paid you $Y and it should have been the lessor amount $X, then you owe SSACI $Y-$X. That is, if SSACI paid you $4450 but the new award (based on a new tuition and fees) turned out to be only $4000, the refund is for $450. Don't forget the change code.

✓ Similarly, if SSACI paid for a student because of early reconciliation but the student later dropped out of school with a full fee waiver, then you must refund SSACI the entire paid amount. Don't forget the change code.

✓ Special Note: Do not send checks to SSACI when you are making refunds unless we have billed you for the amount. Put another way, after all is said and done, if you owe us money because of refunds made in the RECN files, rest assured that we will bill you to get our money.

    f)   Reconciled versus paid and DATES, DATES, and DATES

Once a record has been reconciled, it is often paid at the same time. However, if it isn't, it will be marked as ADRC. It usually is paid during the next weekly RECN cycle.

✓ The status code tells only part of the story about reconciled awards and paid awards. It is a quick overview of what is going on as it applies to the *entire student record*. As long as one award is unreconciled, the record can be in an ACTV state. *Besides the status code, check the appropriate date fields*. All of the award fields have associated dates: date of the initial award, date the award is reconciled, date the award is paid, date the award is refunded. These dates give the detailed information you need to know to understand the status of awards.

    g)   Refund versus reconciliation

✓ If you know that a student's award should be less than SSACI's offer, it is best to reconcile for the right amount and be done with it. Reconciling for the initial offer and then refunding to make the award right is a waste of your time.

    h)   Reconciliation, rejection and RUPD
        i)   Reject reason codes

It may happen that SSACI can't process returned RECN records. If this happens the record will be *rejected*. This means the record just as received by SSACI will be put in an REJT file with a code (the "reject reason code") added that gives the reason for the rejection. The reject reason codes and their brief explanations are:

RJ02	Recipient of a Part Time grant has an Edit 02 and may not be an Indiana resident
RJ04	Recipient of a Part Time grant has an Edit 04 and has used their four years of eligibility
RJ10	Recipient of a Part Time grant has an Edit 10 and has used their ten years of eligibility
RJAI	Student attending different institution or adding a record already paid
RJAJ	Award is INACtive due to revised data
RJAK	Award has already been reconciled or refunded
RJAL	Reconciling 21st Century/NGS without having reconciled HEA/FOC

RJAM	Failure to lower 21st Century/NGS after lowering HEA/FOC (reconciling or refunding)
RJAN	Reconciling/Refunding for a lower amount than the term award without using an "adjust" change code of CC, XA, or ZB
RJAO	Reconciling for blank amount with a change code or refunding total reconciled amount without using a "withdrawn" change code of CG, CH, CF, CC, YA, ZB or XA
RJAP	Attempt to reconcile/refund an award in WAIT status
RJFP	Attempt to reconcile Part Time grant after HEA/FOC or 21st Century or NGS has been paid
RJIA	Attempt to reconcile/refund for amount greater than term award amount
RJND	Record had an action code of U but otherwise did not have any updated data
RJNK	SSACI Only Fields are not valid or SSN not nine digits long
RJPJ	Use of an invalid PJ code
RJPT	Attempt to reconcile previous term
RJST	Recipient of a Part Time grant not in SSACI database or user-modified record has wrong SSN
RJSW	Incomplete or incorrect Part Time grant/NGS information, including amount too large or too small or failure to use change code XC

A final word on the triple play: reconciliation, rejection, and RUPD files. If all your returned RECN records are accepted by SSACI for processing, there will be no associated REJT file. Such files are created only when incorrect RECN records are processed; the REJT file always refers to the preceding (last) incoming RECN file. Similarly, if there are no new awards to add or old awards to delete from your RECN file, there will be no RUPD file. But if there are changes, the RUPD file refers to changes *from* the last SSACI created RECN file t*o* the current RECN file.

5) Access to data

   a) Overview

      i) iXchange

Complete instructions for using iXchange are available once you have logged into the system with a Web browser.

      ii) iXchange access

You can use any Web-browser you choose to access your files. Access to files is at the URL https://secure.in.gov/serv/ssaci_iXchange, where the Username is your Title IV number. A traditional Password is required to log into your account. As a rule, SSACI will accumulate files in your iXchange account until it becomes crowded. At that time, all but the most recent files will be removed.

iii) Secure server and zipped files

All data files from SSACI will be zipped when downloaded. They are on a secure server so that complete security is maintained during both downloads and uploads. Uploaded files can be sipped by the user but need not be: iXchange will zip them before copying them.

iv) Working on the iXchange data

The SSACI Viewer automatically updates field 1 in the iXchange files to a "U" if the record is updated or to an "A" if a record is added. The Viewer also preserves the "SSACI Use Only" fields at the end of the record. If you use an application other than the Viewer to change iXchange records, make sure the application preserves the field lengths and types, updates field 1, and preserves the SSACI Use Only fields. Failure to do these things will result in either an ignored record or a rejected one.

v) Usernames and passwords

Remember that your Username for logging into the iXchange site is your Title IV number. The Password to complete the login has been given you under separate cover.

6) Communications

SSACI communicates regularly with the financial aid community about the electronic information exchange system and the iXchange processes via e-mail. The e-mail messages all have the subject line:

******************SSACI UPDATE *******************

Please read all these messages and distribute them within the office.

7) SSACI Viewer

The SSACI Viewer is an application that allows users to view and manipulate the data in the files APPL, NOTF, RECN, and REJT. It can be used to update student records to clear a PJ or reconcile awards. It allows users to add student records for consideration of a part time award. The Viewer is periodically enhanced and is available as a self-extracting zip file on the iXchange Information page
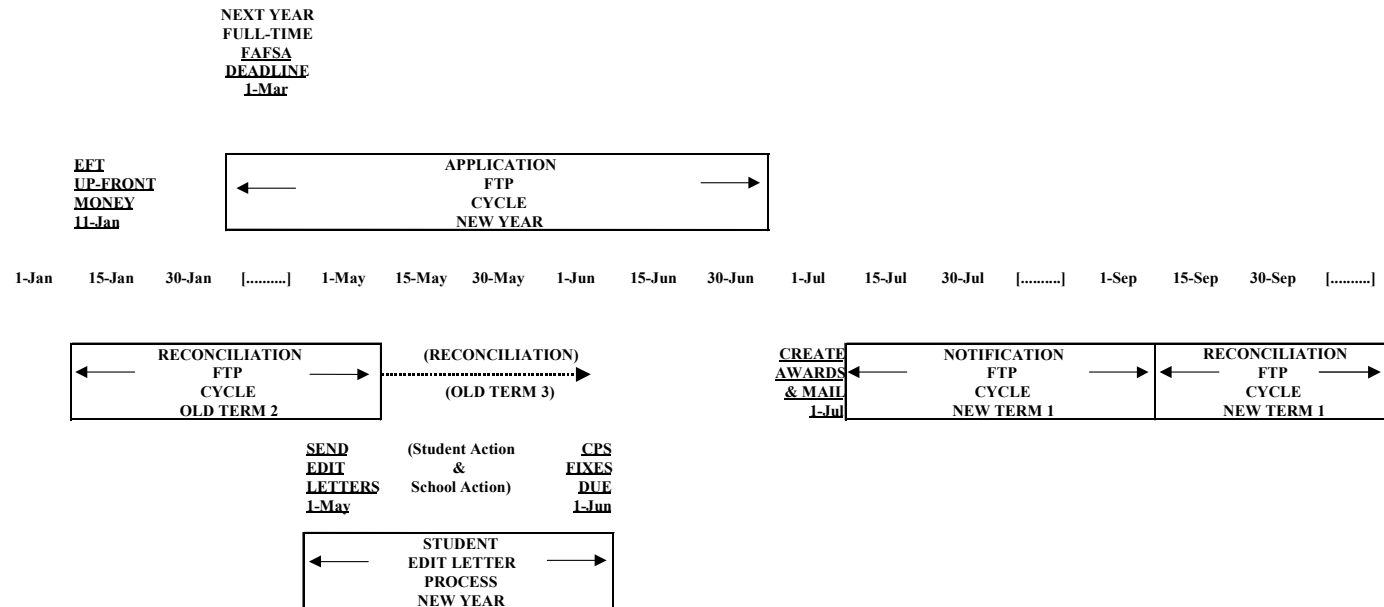
8) Typical dates for iXchange cycles and processes

The following chart shows the typical dates when SSACI starts and finishes the various iXchange cycles. The dates are tentative in the sense that a cycle might start a day or two after the stated date. For example, awards are created around the 1st of July but in fact the actual date could be the 2nd or 3rd.

State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana

Typical Dates for FTP Cycles and Processes
Academic Year Award Cycle

NEXT YEAR
FULL-TIME
FAFSA
DEADLINE
1-Mar

EFT
UP-FRONT
MONEY
11-Jan

APPLICATION
FTP
CYCLE
NEW YEAR

1-Jan   15-Jan   30-Jan   [..........]   1-May   15-May   30-May   1-Jun   15-Jun   30-Jun   1-Jul   15-Jul   30-Jul   [..........]   1-Sep   15-Sep   30-Sep   [..........]

RECONCILIATION
FTP
CYCLE
OLD TERM 2

(RECONCILIATION)
(OLD TERM 3)

CREATE
AWARDS
& MAIL
1-Jul

NOTIFICATION
FTP
CYCLE
NEW TERM 1

RECONCILIATION
FTP
CYCLE
NEW TERM 1

SEND
EDIT
LETTERS
1-May

(Student Action
&
School Action)

CPS
FIXES
DUE
1-Jun

STUDENT
EDIT LETTER
PROCESS
NEW YEAR

Special Note on the Information Folder

Updated documents for file layouts, calculating awards, full and part time, schedules, return of funds and so on are available in the Information folder of iXchange.